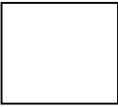


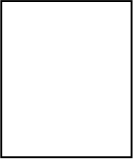
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EASTERN EUROPE

 **Stalin's Interviews** The dramatic and unprecedented intensification of the current Soviet propaganda "peace offensive," as revealed by Stalin's action in proposing a meeting with President Truman, reflects the grave and increasing anxiety of the Kremlin over the progress of western defensive planning and economic recovery in western Europe. Stalin's interviews also reveal the continued determination of the Kremlin to prevent the containment of the USSR by an increasingly strong western bloc.

 **Atlantic Pact** In its timing, Stalin's interview appears to have been motivated primarily by the rapid development of the Atlantic Pact and reflects Soviet determination to prevent, delay, or at least minimize the entire western defense effort. Soviet concern over the Pact had already been expressed in the Kremlin's blunt note to Norway and in the recent Soviet "White Paper" on the Pact. Owing to the proximity of Norway, the USSR is unquestionably disturbed over possible Norwegian adherence to the Pact and, despite the peaceful tone of Stalin's pronouncements, can be expected to intensify its efforts to prevent Scandinavian participation in western defense plans. Although Soviet aggression is unlikely, the USSR will probably increase its pressure on the Scandinavian countries through propaganda, Communist Party activity, and possibly economic pressure.

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STALIN'S PRESS INTERVIEWS

☐ **Insincerity** By presenting his proposal for a Truman-Stalin meeting through the press rather than through official channels, Stalin has not committed the USSR to any specific action and has been able to exploit the hope of the world for peace. The insincerity of Stalin's proposal is revealed by his refusal to meet President Truman outside the Soviet orbit, which is actually an attempt to create the impression that the West must go to Stalin. Although Stalin's health might keep him from making the long journey to Washington, it presumably would not prevent him from going to a nearby country outside the Soviet orbit. Moreover, if the Kremlin were sincere in its desire to meet the West halfway, Stalin would not have made his proposal to the US alone. This approach was undoubtedly designed to create disunity among the western powers and to arouse the suspicions of the non-Communist world concerning the good faith and reliability of the US.

☐ **No Policy Change** Although the Kremlin would welcome a Truman-Stalin meeting on Soviet terms, Stalin's recent statements offer no evidence of any change in basic Soviet policy toward the West or of any relaxation of Soviet efforts toward the expansion of world Communism. For example, Stalin's remarks concerning Germany, coupled with his failure to refer to the currency issue, reveal continued Soviet determination to prevent the establishment of a west German state. Stalin reiterated the Soviet demand made during the negotiations of last August and offered no immediate prospect for the lifting of the Berlin blockade.

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